

Visual Artist Shalene Valenzuela: Ceramics

Winner of the Jessie Wilber and Frances Senska Individual Artist Award, established by a private gift to the arts council from Stacy Hamm and Sage Walden.

Shalene Valenzuela was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. She received a BA in Art Practice at the UC Berkeley and an MFA in Ceramics from California College of Arts and Crafts. In 2007, she moved from her longtime home of Oakland, CA to participate in a long-term residency at The Clay Studio of Missoula, where she now serves as the executive director.

Valenzuela has participated in summer artist residencies at the Archie Bray Foundation (2006) and Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts (2004, 2011). She has taught a variety of classes at Flathead Valley Community College, University of Montana, Oregon College of Art and Craft, The Clay Studio of Missoula, Missoula Art Museum, Richmond Art Center, ASUC Studios at UC Berkeley, and CCA Extended Education. She has also been a guest artist and speaker at a number of art centers, colleges, and universities, and her work has been featured in several group and solo exhibitions nationally.

Valenzuela's ceramic sculptures of everyday vintage objects are painted with "playful and bright" narratives that "explore topics ranging from fairytales, urban mythologies, consumer culture, societal expectations, etiquette, and coming-of-age issues." Application reviewers called her work, "A breath of fresh air, which is what you want to feel when you look at art. Her work has a lot of spirit, it is playful, but there is a subtext that is serious. It's talking about womanhood and gender roles, but we love that you can see it on two levels."